

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 1178

By Williams

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of John “Lil’ John” Buttera of California.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of John “Lil’ John” Buttera; and

WHEREAS, John Buttera was an exemplary public servant and consummate professional who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow car enthusiasts in numerous capacities; and

WHEREAS, he served with acumen and alacrity as a racecar and street rod builder, in which capacity he earned the respect of his peers and clients alike for the exemplary quality of his work; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Buttera set trends with his creative masterpieces dating back to the dragsters, funny cars, and Pro Stock machines he built in the 1960s and 1970s; some of his notable clients included Don Prudhomme and Don Schumacher; and

WHEREAS, characterized by their simplicity, elegance in design, and a low-slung wicked stance, John Buttera’s aerodynamic funny cars won many championships; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Buttera set the standard in the NHRA Pro Stock class with a machine he built for longtime client Barry Setzer in the mid-1970s; with a style that is still implemented today, the car featured removable panels and a chrome molly tube chassis; and

WHEREAS, in 1974, John Buttera turned his attention to street rods, building a 1926 Tall T Ford, the first in a long series of influential hot rods; and

WHEREAS, renowned for his subtle craftsmanship and superior engineering skills, Mr. Buttera is credited for being the first person to whittle street rod, racecar, and motorcycle parts from solid chunks of billet aluminum; and

WHEREAS, during the latter half of the 1980s, through the 1990s, and into the new millennium, John Buttera designed cutting edge parts and components for many companies,

including Edelbrock Corporation, Harley Davidson, and Bon Speed; he became well known in the custom motorcycle scene, building several “smoothie” style V-Twin bikes; and

WHEREAS, in 2004, he returned to what he loved most, building street rods and driving them across the country; he scratch built a little polished aluminum lakes modified roadster in his Los Alamitos, California, garage and drove it to Indianapolis to the Goodguys Hot Rod Nationals where he was honored as a Goodguys “Hot Rod Hero”; and

WHEREAS, John Buttera qualified eighth in the Indy 500 on his very first try; that accomplishment was especially sweet considering he had garnered a used Eagle tub, built an engine, and worked diligently in his garage, with the help of some friends, to assemble the car he would drive; and

WHEREAS, his efforts at Indy did not go unnoticed by the establishment, as Mr. Buttera was awarded the first-ever Clint Brawner Trophy for technical achievement; and

WHEREAS, his many professional achievements aside, John Buttera was deeply devoted to his family, and he always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, he enjoyed the love of his son, Chris, daughter, Leigh, son-in-law, Ronnie Capps, and grandchildren, Katie and Max; and

WHEREAS, John Buttera leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of John “Lil’ John” Buttera, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Buttera.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.